

NOT JUST NETS

MAPPING THE NEW BROOKLYN



Satellite image by Space Imaging

It's the most exciting Brooklyn news in five decades.

But Bruce Ratner's plan to bring the New Jersey Nets to an arena he would build near the intersection of Atlantic and Flatbush avenues is minuscule in comparison to all the development planned for the greater Downtown and Brownstone Brooklyn areas. The arena is even dwarfed by the massive office and residential towers that Ratner plans to build immediately adjacent to it, towers

that would substantially obscure the arena from the view of motorists on busy Flatbush Avenue.

The massive Downtown Brooklyn Plan — which would turn the area into a sister to Midtown Manhattan with skyscrapers meant to attract corporate back-office leases and government tenants — is, right now, coursing through the city public review process. The Downtown Plan overlaps both the Brooklyn Academy of Music Cultural District and Ratner's Atlantic Yards,

where the Nets arena would be located.

Meanwhile, just south of the arena site, Park Slope's Fourth Avenue has been up-zoned to allow taller buildings and encourage commercial and residential development. To the west, Lowe's home improvement and Fairway supermarket will soon open traffic-generating big box stores, and an Ikea is planned in Red Hook.

On the waterfront, there's Brooklyn Bridge Park commercial-recreational development, negotiations to bring Carnival Cruise

Lines to Pier 7, and a city-Port Authority review of the best uses for Piers 8 through 12 in Carroll Gardens and Red Hook.

If anything, this photo, taken by Space Imaging in December 2002 and annotated by The Brooklyn Papers this week, omits some projects.

If implemented, these projects would, collectively, forever change Brooklyn as we've known her. Some will, by law, require public review; for others, developers and elected officials will seek to

skirt scrutiny and debate.

Advocates of the overlapping Downtown Brooklyn Plan and Atlantic Yards (which form one entity, only a tiny portion of which would house the Nets) want the projects discussed separately.

But only by considering jointly the impact of all the projects shown above can any of them be properly evaluated.

In the center spread: an enlarged view of the Downtown Plan and Atlantic Yards.

SEE CENTER SPREAD FOR COMPLETE COVERAGE

successful weight loss the difference between this and this was this

50% off registration fee! offer expires Jan. 31.

718-522-0189
189 Montague Street, Brooklyn Heights Suite 508

Antonella Serino lost 96 lbs & 245 inches in just 60 weeks! Results vary as people do.

We don't have something that other restaurants own (a microwave)

We're in the 21st century, but for us some things need to be old fashioned, especially in our kitchen. For example, our tomato sauce is cooked 4 hours before it's ready, to take out the acidity of the tomatoes. We think the good things in life need time. That's why, when you eat at Fragole, you'll feel the difference.

Fragole Ristorante

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ADVERTISER FOCUS

Second pie always free at Twins Pizza House



Tony and Angie Vornovakis, owners of Twins Pizza.

Twins is the place to call on Super Bowl Sunday, for all the pizzas, heroes and sodas you need to get the gang through the game. Start with the Family Special: two large pies with one topping each, bread sticks, Buffalo Wings and a liter of soda for \$19.95 (+ tax). Delivery in Brownstone Brooklyn is quick and free. Move over, Dominos!

Tony and Angie Vornovakis hit on a great new twist in pizza: two pies for the price of one. Always and every time. They oversee every pie and ensure top quality, unlike many pizza delivery outlets.

With that idea as the cornerstone of their pizza shop, Twins has created a local following throughout Brownstone Brooklyn in the 12 years they've been open at 75 Nevins St., just off Atlantic Avenue.

The rectangular Twins Pizza boxes enclose your two piping hot and fresh pizzas with your selection of toppings. Pies come in two sizes: medium (10" diameter) starting at two for \$7.65, and large (14" diameter) starting at two for \$10.25.

In addition to the "usual" pizza toppings,

choose from ham, spinach, broccoli, bacon, pineapple, fresh garlic and jalapeno peppers. As for heroes, try the hearty Philly Cheese Steak (\$5.50), Sausage and Peppers (\$3.95), Meatball Parmigiana (\$3.75), Eggplant Parmigiana (\$3.95), and Veal or Chicken Cutlet (both \$4.25).

Vegetarians have their own special: two pies with onions, mushrooms, green peppers, black & green olives, and broccoli. Medium sized is two for \$11.95, large is two for \$14.95. For the super hungry, Twins offers the Super Supreme: two pies smothered in beef, pepperoni, sausage, ham, onions, mushrooms, peppers and olives. Medium sized is two for \$12.95, large is two for \$16.50.

Having a party? Just call and let Twins know the number of guests you are expecting, and they'll figure out how many pies you need, and what size.

Twins Pizza House is located at 75 Nevins St., between Atlantic Avenue and State Street. Cash only. Free delivery. Closed Sundays (except for Feb. 1). Call (718) 625-5550.

2 DIZ

Bandit robs video store

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

An armed robber, looking to score some quick cash, tied up five employees at a Blockbuster Video on Court Street between Douglass and Degraw streets just as the store was closing, at 1 a.m. on Jan. 17.

Hiding in the lower level of the store, the man pulled out a gun as employees went downstairs to make sure the store was cleared out.

The bandit tied the workers to a railing and told the manager to escort him upstairs where he made him remove all the cash from the register and then told him to open up the safe.

When the manager explained that the safe was on time delay and couldn't be opened, the suspect grabbed the surveillance video out of the camera and fled with a bag containing \$3,000 and a pair of the store keys.

The employees were able to wriggle themselves free and call 911, police said.

The suspect is described as Hispanic, 5-foot-8, heavyset, wearing a black ski cap, scarf and puffy winter jacket with blue jeans and carrying a silver colored handgun.

Guard punched
Just because it's on display, doesn't mean it's up for grabs.

84/76 Blotters

But when a security guard at a drugstore on Atlantic Avenue near Third Avenue tried to teach that lesson to a bandit, the thief responded with a quick jab to the guard's right cheek.

The incident began just before noon on Jan. 24, when the employee, 48, tried to stop the suspect from allegedly pocketing \$43 worth of batteries and flashlights from the store's display.

Police were called in and arrested a 40-year-old suspect.

Noble gesture
A man looking for more than a good road, strutted his way into the Barnes & Noble on Court Street near State Street around 9 p.m. on Jan. 21.

When the suspect allegedly attempted to leave the store with \$60 worth of CDs in his pocket, a security guard tried to stop him.

Don't lose yourself for this job, the thief said as he pulled up his shirt to reveal a gun tucked into the waistband of his pants. He then fled out the door.

State St. mug

A woman walking home from the Nevins Street subway station was held up by a man at Nevins and State streets just before midnight on Jan. 16.

"Give me your money," the suspect demanded as he approached the woman.

The victim, 20, handed over \$18 and the man fled down State Street, police said.

Rob bartender
Two men wearing fedoras plopped themselves down at a

THE BROOKLYN PAPERS • WWW.BROOKLYNPAPERS.COM

January 24, 2004

bar on Atlantic Avenue near Boreum Place just after noon on Jan. 19.

"Is my father's 70th birthday," one of the tipplers told the bartender.

As a special request in honor of the aging patriarch, the patrons asked the bartender to play some more tunes on the jukebox.

When the bartender returned, she noticed that her Prada purse, valued at \$1,150, and

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Twins PIZZA HOUSE
We're Open on Super Bowl SUNDAY!

FAMILY \$19.95
Meal 2 Large Pies

with One Topping each

- Bread Sticks
- Beef Wings
- Liver of Beef

Meatball 3.25
Meatball Parmigiana 3.75
Sausage 3.50
Sausage & Peppers 3.95
Sausage Parmigiana 3.95
Eggplant Parmigiana 3.95
Chicken Cutlet Parmigiana 4.25
Veal Cutlet Parmigiana 4.25
Philly Cheese Steak 5.30

HOT HEROES

Meatball 3.25
Meatball Parmigiana 3.75
Sausage 3.50
Sausage & Peppers 3.95
Sausage Parmigiana 3.95
Eggplant Parmigiana 3.95
Chicken Cutlet Parmigiana 4.25
Veal Cutlet Parmigiana 4.25
Philly Cheese Steak 5.30

SPECIALIZING IN PIZZA PARTIES

Prada wallet, valued at \$550, were missing from behind the bar along with her keys and credit card.

Identity theft

A woman living on Hicks Street learned this week that wrongly used her credit information to obtain a credit card in her name and racked up \$3,000 in charges between Jan. 7 and Jan. 19.

Instead of sending the bills to her Brooklyn Heights address near Clark Street, the statements went to an address on Putnam Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, police said.

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Veal Cutlet Parmigiana 4.25
Philly Cheese Steak 5.30

FREE DELIVERY 625-5550
75 Nevins St. (at Atlantic Ave.)
Closed Sundays

SPECIALIZING IN PIZZA PARTIES

BECAUSE WE CARE ABOUT YOUR HEART

FREE Heart Month Activities by Maimonides Medical Center February 2004

MONDAYS

2nd (8-10am) - Screening
Cholesterol/Glucose
Gallman lobby • Biker Cholin Rm.

2nd (10am-Noon) - Screening
Blood Pressure
Advance Directives Information
Gallman lobby

9th (11am-1pm) - Screening
Body Fat Analysis
Advance Directives Information
Boro Park "Y"

11th (1pm) - Lecture
"Heart Healthy Choices"
Speaker: Ray Wainrib, RD
Boro Park
4912 14th Ave., Bklyn.

23rd (12:30pm) - Lecture
"Heart Disease & Treatment"
Speaker: Mark Grossman, MD
St. Patrick's School Auditorium
97th St. & 4th Ave., Bklyn.

TUESDAYS

10th (10am-Noon) - Screening
Blood Pressure/Glucose
Gallman lobby

10th (11am) - Lecture
"Heart Wellness - Medication & Diet"
Speaker: Sandra Gooden, NP
AMUJ Senior Center
5201 13th Ave., Bklyn.

WEDNESDAYS

4th (11am) - Lecture
"Heart Wellness - Medication & Diet"
Speaker: Robert Maditz, MD
Cardiac Rehab & Exercise Program
4821 F. Hamilton Pkwy., Bklyn.

11th (10am) - Lecture
"Secondary Risk Factors"
Speaker: Robert Maditz, MD
Cardiac Rehab & Exercise Program
4821 F. Hamilton Pkwy., Bklyn.

11th (10:30am) - Lecture
"Exercise & Your Heart"
Speaker: Robert Maditz, MD
Cardiac Rehab & Exercise Program
4821 F. Hamilton Pkwy., Bklyn.

25th (6-8pm) - Screening
Blood Pressure
Gallman lobby

THURSDAYS

5th (3-5pm) - Screening
Blood Pressure/Glucose
Advance Directives Information
Gallman lobby

12th (2pm) - Lecture
"Stress Reduction: Medication & Relaxation Techniques"
Speaker: Linda Budzwick, RN
Kings Bar Library
3650 Neeland Ave., Bklyn.
(btw. Ave. W & X)

19th (11am) - Lecture
Topic: "Superstitions"
Speaker: Fata Alarude, CNS, NP
Joy Senior Center
2600 Ocean Ave., Bklyn.
(btw. Ave. U & V)

19th (10:30am) - Lecture
"Exercise & Your Heart"
Speaker: Fata Alarude, CNS, NP
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26th (11:30am) - Lecture
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FREE Heart Month Activities by Maimonides Medical Center February 2004

THURSDAYS

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Blood Pressure/Glucose
Advance Directives Information
Gallman lobby

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SERVING ALL FAITHS

Car burglar strikes sour note

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

A motorist was forced to face the music this week, and it didn't sound so sweet.

A man with a car packed full of musical instruments stopped to pick up a few drums and accessories at his apartment on Sterling Place near Butler Street at 5:30 pm on Jan. 22.

He left the car unattended for just a few minutes, but it was long enough for a nimble thief to swoop in and nab a set of ten-toms worth \$500, symbols valued at \$1,200, drums worth \$200 and a drum case, police said.

Quick change

A woman shopping at a grocery store on Seventh Avenue at Carroll Street noticed

her wallet was missing and returned home to report it stolen just after noon on Jan. 24.

As soon as the 31-year-old returned to her Carroll Street home, she received a phone call from the credit card company informing her that somebody had just charged \$250 at the supermarket and another \$299 at a nearby liquor store on Park Place, police said.

In addition to the credit card, the victim reported \$160 and a yoga studio card stolen, police said.

Diamond dog

Diamonds may be forever, but not when they get tossed down the garbage shoot.

A 40-year-old woman was arrested on Jan. 24 after allegedly slapping around a woman and removing a platinum, 2.5-

herat diamond ring off her finger.

Instead of pocketing the \$2,500 ring, the hapless thief tossed the pricey jewel down the incinerator. The incident occurred at Third Avenue and St. Marks Place just after 2 am.

Dirty duo

A Fifth Avenue Laundromat near Bergen Street almost got cleaned out on Tuesday when a pair of gun-wielding reprobates pushed their way in at closing time.

Just before 11 pm, on Jan. 20, one of the suspects knocked on the locked door and pleaded with an employee to let him drop off his laundry.

But when the employee obliged, another man appeared out of nowhere and pushed his way in as well, locking the door behind him.

The quick-thinking employee informed the unwitting guests that they were being captured on security videotape and the boss was in the back watching.

"Shut up," one of the suspects said in Spanish before unlocking the door and quickly fleeing — empty-handed — down Fifth Avenue.

Gabby grabbers

A woman shopping at a supermarket on Seventh Avenue told police she was followed around by a roving band of

gabbing women who grabbed her wallet somewhere between the produce and deli departments at 1 pm on Jan. 21. She told police they were speaking Russian.

The victim, 76, noticed the wallet was missing as she neared the deli counter and was about to place her order.

More than \$140 was taken, police said.

Car-napper

A 26-year-old woman may have been dreaming up creative ways to tell her mother that she would not be getting her car back.

The motorist parked her mother's car on Fifth Street and Eighth Avenue at 11:30 pm on Jan. 18.

When she returned just five hours later, the 2003 Toyota Corolla was gone, police said.

Benz job

When the owner of a 1990 Mercedes-Benz parked his car at Eighth Street and Second Avenue, at 5 pm, on Jan. 26, he returned to find a few things missing.

In three hours, both the rims and tires had been swiped along with a DVD player, CD player and \$40 headset, police said.

7th Ave. mug

An elderly man making his way down Seventh Avenue was mugged in broad daylight by a pair of thugs as he approached Ninth Street at 3:20 pm on Jan. 23.

The duo reached into the man's right front pocket, grabbed his wallet, and then ran off, police said.

In addition to the wallet, the victim lost \$46 and food stamps in the heist.

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Worried for toddler

Dear John:

When my fiancé and I get into an argument, he tells me that I'd better stop because someone is going to get hit. He also raises his voice, curses and speaks very arrogantly. I don't answer him because whenever I tell him he is being disrespectful, he tells me that I am making him raise his voice and make those threats. We have been together for a little less than one year, and I really love him. I have a toddler, however, and I don't want to put him or myself into any physically or orally abusive relationship. Should I break it off? — Worried

Dear Worried:

Relationships like society as a whole, are able to function because we hold to certain standards of acceptable behavior. Abusive conduct is outside the bounds of acceptable behavior. Put your wedding plans on hold until your fiancé agrees to take at least two steps: attend relationship counseling with you, and participate in an anger management program.

If he refuses, then he is not the right guy for you, and he is certainly no role model for the man you want your son to become.

The important thing for you to recognize is that the current situation is unacceptable. Indecision on your part is not the right decision.

Dear John:

I am going out with a new man who is a real gentleman. He happily pays the bill whenever we go out. Sometimes, I feel guilty because I'd like to share the expense. Is it a good idea to bring the topic up? I feel it may ruin the attraction at this early stage but am not sure if he may think I am stingy or greedy. I'd appreciate any advice from you. — Ladylike

Dear Ladylike:

To most men, paying for the meal, opening a car door and other ways of being especially attentive to your needs are part of the dating ritual. It's wonderful to express your appreciation, but understand that he wants to show you that he can provide for you by doing all these things. You might say it's a man's way of nurturing. Rather than offering to pay for the meal or the movie tickets, offer to make him a dinner at home, or surprise him with a little gift. Thanking him in this way lets him know that he's doing all the right things that order to win your heart. ***

Dear John:

I find myself constantly "keeping tabs" on my boyfriend, "Larry." I do this because my father cheated on my mother, as did my oldest brother on his wife. I always ask Larry what he's doing and who he's doing it with. Deep down in my heart, I know that he has never lied to me and isn't going



MEN ARE FROM MARS WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS
By John Gray

to do the same thing to me because he believes that cheating is not the answer to problems and that if a couple can't talk through the issues they are having, they need to go their separate ways, not cheat on each other. How can I stop what I'm doing before I ruin things between us? — Tom About Trust

Dear Tom:

You have a wonderful, wise man at your side. I'm glad you realize that your irrational fears will eventually chase him away. Tickets, offer to make him a dinner at home, or surprise him with a little gift. Thanking him in this way lets him know that he's doing all the right things that order to win your heart. ***

Your boyfriend has given you no reason to doubt him. The first step you must take is to treat him with the same appreciation and respect that he gives you. If these feelings are more than you can resolve on your own, seek out a therapist who can help you face these issues and move beyond them.

Why kids are so sensitive

Q: Everything my 5-year-old son wears has to be soft cotton and have the tags out or he won't wear it. Shoes and socks have to be loose, and he always seems to be fidgeting because of something about his clothes. Is he just picky? — A mother

A: One 2-year-old's solution to his own clothes: She stripped, no matter where she was. Her mom made cotton reversible jumpers so no exposed seams touched her daughter's skin. She "removed every shred of label from any piece of clothing," covered seams with satin sewing tape, and lightly stroked her child's feet, legs and back each day.

The effort made life bearable. But even so, the girl grew up with the labels "typewriter" and "The Princess and the Pea," as sensitive as the princess kept awake by a pea under a stack of mattresses.

Another mother recalls one of her daughters was like a "giant touch receptor." Even as a baby, touch was not soothing.

For a highly sensitive child, not

Parent-to-Parent



By Betsy Flieger

just getting dressed, but eating, bathing, and brushing teeth and hair turn into daily battles until coping strategies are discovered.

If you have a finicky child, are you understanding and helpful or overwhelmed and irritated? How you react makes a huge difference in whether your child thrives, says Eileen Costello, MD, co-author with Penn Klaus, MD, of "Quirky Kids: Understanding and Helping Your Child

Through trial and error, one mother knows what works for her 9-year-old son and she's trying to educate others about her son's diagnosis: sensory integration dysfunction. She accepts that the texture of new food makes him gag, clothes have to feel just right and he needs wrap-around sunglasses because his eyes are light. The guide she wrote about the syndrome has become



Who Doesn't Fit In? (Ballantine Books, 2003).

"If you start from a compassionate, child-centered point of view, you won't conclude that the child is deliberately misbehaving to get your goat," says Costello, a pediatrician and mother of three. "The children are wired this way in their brains."

Puzzled but compassionate parents act as sleuths and piece together combinations of quirks. For example, a child who wants to wear the same thing each day, won't go to movie theaters and eat only soft, white food — what's going on?

Through trial and error, one mother knows what works for her 9-year-old son and she's trying to educate others about her son's diagnosis: sensory integration dysfunction. She accepts that the texture of new food makes him gag, clothes have to feel just right and he needs wrap-around sunglasses because his eyes are light. The guide she wrote about the syndrome has become

a popular book recommended by many parents and healthcare providers: Carol Stock Knaus's "The Out-of-Sync Child" (Perigee, 1998).

Sensory integration dysfunction is the brain's inability to correctly process information brought in by all the senses.

The nervous system can overreact or under-react, for example, to hot and cold and repetitive noises, and bring out behavior such as hostility, withdrawal and clumsiness.

At times, helping your child grow up will involve coping with a formal diagnosis such as sensory integration dysfunction. That is not a major mental illness but requires intervention, the authors of "Quirky Kids" say. The best approach to take, and when to worry versus when not to, depends on the child.

Occupational therapists familiar with sensory integration are helpful at figuring out what stimulations are comforting, what to avoid and how to avoid them.

Costello says.

"Occupational therapists are the guardian angels of kids with sensory problems," she says. "The right person actually gets it, and has an eye for solutions."

Can you help?

"My son and his wife recently separated. I have been with their kids, ages 8 and 5, nearly every day since they were born. Now the mother has decided that she hates me and is afraid of me. She is exercising her right to keep me away from the children since South Carolina has no grandparent rights. She is refusing any contact with me at all and the children miss me as much as I miss them. Any suggestion I do get to see them when my son has them. Their mother is doing everything she can to stop my visitation completely but she has no basis." — a grandmother

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If you would like help reconnecting with school, the NYC Department of Education invites you to take advantage of a program it is running at least through February 6, 2004.

For further information, please see "Notice to Parents and Former Students" on the NYC Department of Education's website at www.nycboe.net/Parents/ or call 311.



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Parent and Community Engagement Meeting

At the meeting, Chancellor Klein will provide an update on the Children First Reform Agenda.

Thursday, January 29, 2004

Regions 9 & 10

(Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

6:30 p.m.

Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School
100 Amsterdam Avenue
Manhattan

Tuesday, February 10, 2004

Regions 1 & 2

(Districts 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

6:30 p.m.

Herbert Lehman High School
3000 East Tremont Avenue
Bronx

Thursday, February 12, 2004

Regions 7 & 8

(Districts 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 31)

6:30 p.m.

Brooklyn Technical High School
DeKalb Avenue and South Elliot Place
(entrance on South Elliot Place)
Brooklyn

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Regions 3 & 4

(Districts 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32)

6:30 p.m.

Thomas Edison High School
165-65 84th Avenue
Queens

Tuesday, March 2, 2004

Regions 5 & 6

(Districts 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 27)

6:30 p.m.

James Madison High School
3787 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Region 7

(Districts 20, 21, 31)

6:30 p.m.

Susan E. Wagner High School
1200 Manor Road
(corner of Brielle Avenue)
Staten Island

District 75 and Alternative Schools parents and community members are welcome to attend the meeting location nearest them.

For more information, contact the Office of Parent and Community Engagement at (212) 374-2323



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1st and 3rd Friday evenings, 6:30 pm
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Saturday mornings, 10:30 am

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Friday, Feb. 6
Service at 6:15 pm; Dinner at 7:15 pm

Family Service & Potluck Dinner

Bring a dish for 8 and celebrate
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Friday, Feb. 20
Service at 6:30 pm; Dinner at 7:30 pm

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The Structure and Meaning of Jewish Prayer
Feb. 7, 14, 21 & 28
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Target calls cartoon better than threats

To the editor:

Your recent article on the animated cartoon posted by Danny Contreras on the "Our Carroll Gardens" Web site concerning the controversy over the Rose House domestic

violence shelter ["Web cartoon bashes shelter," Jan. 24] quotes me out of context to portray me as upset with how I was portrayed. However, using my entire quote would have conveyed quite a differ-

LETTERS

ent impression. Here is what I actually said:

"I am portrayed as an inarticulate Homer Simpson-type doll, complete with a huge beer belly (my actual beer belly is only moderately large). I think it would have been funnier if he made me a Professor Frink type character, but Danny's sense of humor is not very acute."

However, he has a great imagination. In his cartoon, no one publicizes the address, and the opponents get favorable media coverage."

This is hardly the complaint of someone who is very angry (as any Simpson's fan knows, being portrayed as Professor Frink would hardly be a compliment; although it would be more consistent with what Danny has said about me in the past). Frankly, although I wish Danny's jokes were better, my response to his cartoon is one of modified elation.

In the past few weeks Danny has changed his anti-Rose House tactics from publicizing the shelter's location (something his site no longer does) to attempts at satire. For that, the community owes him a vote of thanks.

Moreover, portraying me as fat and stupid is certainly less personally annoying than his prior Web postings threatening to reveal secrets about my personal life and calling me "sub-human." Danny's cartoon is in the time-honored tradition of American political discourse, and I say the more of it the better! Just don't expect to laugh.

—Howard Graubard,
Carroll Gardens

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Disturbed by faking pet's death

To the editor:

Your story about Desmond Robertson's experience at the Prospect Park Animal Clinic ["A Doggone Shame," Jan. 17] was very disturbing to read.

In addition to the other causes of action listed in your story, he also has a claim for fraud in tort, which would allow him to claim damages beyond the contract. They took his money under false pretenses and hid their actions from him.

Even more disturbing is that the vet was openly showing the dog to other clients knowing that Robertson would be back with his other dogs, and was likely to be upset at the betrayal.

Excellent article.

—Ramin Amato, Park Slope

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JOIN Residents, o Down

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

As Brooklyn residents and elected and ed officials digest the news that developer Ratner wants to build a colossal, \$2.5 billion residential and commercial complex at 7 Terminal that would house his newly as New Jersey Nets, a far less publicized rezoning plan that would pack Dov Brooklyn with sweeping skyscrapers is full steam ahead.

And facing the two largest development in the borough's history, some Brooklynites are that the two projects are not being considered. The Downtown Plan, a major push by and state to retain back-office space in New City, and keep corporations from fleeing Jersey and abroad, would make way for 6.7 million square feet of office space and 1 million square feet of retail space as some residential development.

But while that plan courses through the city land use review process, the new Frank Gehry-designed Atlantic Yard — Ratner's colossal, \$2.5 billion residential commercial building centered around a seat arena to house the Nets — will likely city review.

"You can't look at each of these projects in an isolated manner, we need to look at this as one development, they are intricately connected," said Councilwoman James, an outspoken opponent of the complex whose district includes parts of both plans.

BAMC

DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN PLAN

Nets arena at the Atlantic Yards could end Coney's Sportsplex dream

By Jotham Soderstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

Developer Bruce Ratner's plan to bring the New Jersey Nets to Brooklyn could jeopardize plans to build a Coney Island amateur athletics arena, known as Sportsplex, which had recently gained new life as a possible venue for volleyball in the city's bid to host the 2012 summer Olympics.

A top official with NYC2012, the group organizing the city's Olympic bid, indicated Thursday that while the Coney Island site has not been ruled out, Ratner's Downtown Brooklyn basketball arena has added a new wrinkle to the Olympics plan.

"It's premature to comment on anything," said Jay Krieger, executive director of NYC2012, "but a world-class arena certainly opens up the possibility [of hosting volleyball]. We're very excited about it."

If National Basketball Association team owners vote to approve the Nets' exodus from New Jersey to Downtown Brooklyn, the \$2.5 billion, Frank Gehry-designed Atlantic Terminal project, that would include a Nets arena and office and residential towers — could serve both as a site for Olympic basketball and indoor volleyball.

The current Olympic bid details the Nets' present home in New Jersey, the Continental Airlines arena, as a site for basketball.

And Ratner has stated that local youth athletic groups and schools, as well as colleges and universities, would use the Downtown arena when the Nets were not playing at home, making a Coney Island Sportsplex



The proposed Coney Island Sportsplex on Surf Avenue next to KeySpan Park.

somewhat redundant.

"For the last couple years, being included in the Olympic bid dramatically strengthened the prospects for the [Sportsplex] project," said Kenneth Adams, president of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce and the Brooklyn Sports Foundation. "If the plans

change, we'll have to re-evaluate."

Without inclusion in the plans for the 2012 summer games, the Sportsplex would be on shaky ground for the second time since the idea was floated by then-Borough President Howard Golden in 1987.

The 12,000-seat amateur sports facility

had originated with hopes that it would serve high school and college athletes. Set to be built on city-owned land on Surf Avenue between West 19th and West 20th streets, the \$70 million project was slated to include an NCAA-regulation basketball court surrounded by a 200-meter, eight-lane track.

But plans for the arena collapsed under the weight of former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's interest in bringing professional baseball to Brooklyn and Staten Island. He pushed forward the plan to build a baseball stadium in Coney Island instead. Both the city and state had secured \$30 million for Sportsplex and Golden added \$7 million from his budget, but when the single-A baseball stadium was erected next to where the storied Thunderbolt roller coaster once stood, all bets were off.

"The people who were behind the Sportsplex were evil," Councilman Domenic Recchia said of the failed push to build the facility. "When you say Sportsplex a chill goes through me." He said the consortium of planners behind the project neglected to talk to the community.

Along with other elected officials, Recchia formed the Coney Island Development Corporation last year to rehabilitate the deteriorating neighborhood, in part by creating more jobs and converting the summer hotspot into a year-round destination.

On Thursday, proposals for a Coney Island development plan were due to the city's Economic Development Corporation. Where, if at all, a Sportsplex arena fits in will become clear after an urban design firm is chosen by the CIDC in the coming months.

Part of its mandate is to consider year-round recreational, cultural and entertainment uses including a recreational complex," said Borough President Marty Markowitz, whose sole appointment to the 13-

member board was Jon Benguini, his director of planning and development. "The planning process undertaken by the corporation will include this subject and help to guide our efforts."

It's anybody's guess whether significant interest would still exist for a Sportsplex in Coney Island if it was no longer included in the 2012 Olympic plans. Besides a proposed amateur athletics facility in the Park Slope armory, on Eighth Avenue between 14th and 15th streets, the construction of a similar sports facility in the Bronx was announced earlier this week.

"Would there still be a rationale?" asked Adams, who has been behind the Sportsplex since its conception. "We'd have to sit down with city officials and consider the Sportsplex in the context of the new planning efforts by the Coney Island Development Corporation. We'd have to ask those questions all over again."

In a 29-page questionnaire released earlier this month, NYC2012 failed to include Coney Island by name in plans for an indoor volleyball arena. A rendering of such a facility identified it only as being in Brooklyn, although most of the other venues were specifically identified. The questionnaire was the final submission to the International Olympics Committee, which will

pick the host city next year among finalists that include Moscow and Paris.

The Brooklyn Nets arena would force the group to re-evaluate some of the city's 20-odd proposals for athletic venues New York be chosen to host the summer games. Krieger spokesman for NYC2012, however, that plans for a Coney Island Sportsplex have not changed. "There are a number of circumstances that are changing, but at the moment indoor volleyball at the Sportsplex is the plan. But any we make will have a ripple that changes everything."

IN AT THE HOP

Officials wait arena, downtown redevelopment linked

Together the two plans could add an additional 14 million square feet of development in the greater Downtown Brooklyn area and would require the taking of approximately 15 acres of private land by eminent domain, a power of the state to claim property that is either deemed blighted or is slated for projects deemed to be for the public good.

For months, the city has refused to field questions about Ratner's Atlantic Yards at public meetings relating to the Downtown Plan, a move that has outraged a number of residents and community board members.

"It's the big elephant that nobody will talk about," said Patti Hagan, a member of the Prospect Heights Action Coalition, an anti-arena neighborhood group that planned to pack a scheduled meeting of Community Board 2 last Wednesday at which the board was set to vote on the Downtown Plan with hundreds of detractors.

Those protests were aborted when the meeting, scheduled on Wednesday, were postponed due to the snowstorm. The vote has been rescheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 3, at 6 p.m. in the auditorium of Brooklyn Technical High School, at DeKalb Avenue and Fort Greene Place. Hagan said her group would be there in force.

Just days after Ratner announced his \$300 million purchase of the Nets, on Friday, Jan. 23, the Department of City Planning reversed itself and agreed to a supplemental scoping session for the arena plan's environmental impact study, taking into consideration the nearly 8 million-square-foot build-out of the Atlantic Yards with regards to the Downtown Plan.

That session will be held on Monday, Feb. 23, at Brooklyn Borough Hall, at 6 p.m. The meeting will come after the community board has released its decision on the Downtown Plan as required by the city's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) timeframe.

Brian Ketchum, an engineer with Community Consulting Services, a non-profit organization that studies traffic and transportation impacts, called City Planning's public meeting too little, too late.

CB2 vote on D'town Plan rescheduled

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Community Board 2 will vote on the Downtown Brooklyn Plan at a rescheduled meeting on Feb. 3 in the auditorium of Brooklyn Technical High School, on DeKalb Avenue at Fort Greene Place, at 6 p.m.

The original meeting, scheduled for Jan. 28, was cancelled because of the snowstorm. The rezoning plan — among the most complex in city history — would make way for 6.7 million square feet of office development, 1,000 units of housing and almost 1 million square feet of retail space.

The community board, which includes Downtown Brooklyn, Brooklyn Heights, Fort Greene and DUMBO, is the first

hurdle in the city's rigorous land use review process.

The CB2 Traffic and Transportation committee voted against the plan last week, calling the city's application — which involves 22 individual actions from rezoning to selling city property to expanding urban renewal areas — woefully inadequate.

The Parks and Land Use committees voted down changes to the urban renewal areas that would allow the city to condemn and seize property.

As part of the city's ULURP process, the application will also go to the borough president, City Planning Commission and City Council.

The plan also includes one block of the proposed Nets arena site where developer Bruce Ratner intends to construct a 620-foot office tower.

na will become the center of family life in Brooklyn. At the same time, it will preserve the quality of life of the neighborhoods that about it."

Markowitz has for three years been pushing to get Brooklyn a professional sports team.

But Tom Angotti, of Windsor Terrace, a professor of Urban Affairs and Planning at Hunter College, has his doubts.

"The Atlantic Yards plan by itself is a major undertaking. If you add to that the BAM expansion, the downtown expansion, the development around Fulton Mall, you're talking about some substantial change," said Angotti, who worked in the Brooklyn office of City Planning in the early '90s.

"They haven't addressed the question of what the impact will be on existing housing surrounding neighborhoods," said Angotti. "It undoubtedly will jack up rents and could very well force out more people than the new housing accommodates."

As part of the arena plan, Ratner plans to construct 4,500 units of housing, although he has not delineated how much of that would be affordable housing. The downtown plan makes way

for 1,000 units of housing.

At the same time, both plans require taking private land for private development.

The Downtown Plan would seize seven acres of privately owned land and would displace 100 units of housing and 130 commercial units, according to City Planning.

For the past month and a half, Community Board 2 — which received the 700-plus page application just before the December holiday season — had to hold committee hearings, host a public hearing and vote. Board members have been asking the city to slow down the review process so they can adequately consider the more than 20 independent actions included in the plan.

But under the City Charter, the board has just 60 days to vote on the plan before it goes on to the borough president, City Planning Commission, City Council and then on to the mayor.

While the supplemental Atlantic Yards information will be made available in several months, both the community board and borough president will have to vote on the Downtown Plan without it.

"The board has to vote on the Downtown Brooklyn Plan hand-knipped or not," said CB2 District Manager Robert Peris.

"The [ULURP] clock is the same for one relatively simple application or a series of 22 interwoven applications. We have the same 60 days no matter what, maybe the ULURP clock needs to be revised," said Peris.

The Downtown Plan's 22 actions include rezoning, and extensions of urban renewal areas that will allow the state to condemn property.

Responding to the loss of 21,000 city jobs to New Jersey in the 1990s, the Bloomberg administration along with the Downtown Brooklyn Council spent more than a year and a half creating the comprehensive plan, the details of which were announced last April.

The mayor has pledged to fund the \$100 million in infrastructure improvements and construction over the next 10 years, with much of it coming in the first few years, but the project would still be largely dependent on market conditions and the ability to lure businesses and developers.

"People are afraid of change," said Michael Burke, executive director of the Downtown Brooklyn Council, who says the plan will secure downtown's place as the third largest commercial district in New York City after Midtown Manhattan and Wall Street. "To protect residents and businesses we have to evaluate this new construction collectively, not individually," said Evan Thies, a spokesman for Downtown Councilman David Vasyk.

But the key question on the minds of most residents is traffic.

Said Judy Stanton, executive director of the Brooklyn Heights Association and a CB2 Land Use committee member, "We'll drown in cars."

CULTURAL DISTRICT

The Downtown Plan and Atlantic Yards are just one part of the massive developments that will form "the new Brooklyn," a phrase Ratner has used to describe the mega-construction going on in his adopted borough.

Factor in all of the development planned to rise in the surrounding neighborhoods and you are looking at 115,000 cars and 430,000 subway riders each day, Ketchum said.

The "new Brooklyn" would include:

- **Atlantic Terminal** — Ratner's 770,000-square-foot office tower and mall atop the Atlantic Avenue subway station. Target, Outback Steak House and Chuck E. Cheese are scheduled to open in the mall, which is tentatively scheduled for completion in May. Office space would be anchored by the Bank of New York.

- **Brooklyn Bridge Park** — a 1.5-mile commercial and recreational development along the waterfront from Pier 6 at Atlantic Avenue to just past the Manhattan Bridge that would include a hotel.

- **BAM Cultural District** — a 14-block mixed-use cultural district in Fort Greene, including housing, retail and artist space.

- **Fairway** — a massive supermarket being built in a 19th-century warehouse at the end of Van Brunt Street in Red Hook.

- **Empire Stores Shopping Mall** — modeled on Chelsea Market, a 400,000-square-foot shopping complex abutting Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park in DUMBO, to open in 2007.

- **Park Slope Rezoning** — the up-zoning of Fourth Avenue to allow for 12-story buildings between Warren and 15th streets.

- **Lowe's** — a big-box home improvement center being built by Ratner on the former U.S. Postal Service site in Gowanus at 12th Street and Second Avenue.

- **Whole Foods** — a 42,000-square-foot organic foods supermarket to be built on Third Avenue at Third Street with up to 220 parking spaces. It would open in 2005.

- **45 Jay St.** — four-story Wachowicz Society residential complex in DUMBO on one of the largest undeveloped plots of land in the city.

- **Ikea** — proposed Swedish furnishings giant store planned for the end of Columbia Street at the old New York Shipyard site in Red Hook.

- **Pier 7** — just south of Atlantic Avenue, the city is negotiating with Carnival Cruise Lines to turn it into a cruise ship dock.

- **Piers 8-12** — the city and Port Authority are studying future use of the Carroll Gardens and Red Hook piers that could bring residential and commercial development.

"We should be thrilled in so many ways that development is coming to Brooklyn," said Borough President Marty Markowitz, a vocal proponent of Ratner's acquisition of the Nets and of Atlantic Yards, the Downtown Plan and future growth in the borough.

"In Brooklyn, we wear everything on our sleeves, and I'm no different," said Markowitz, adding, "I believe the arena is the most exciting opportunity we've had in decades. The are-

na will become the center of family life in Brooklyn. At the same time, it will preserve the quality of life of the neighborhoods that about it."

Markowitz has for three years been pushing to get Brooklyn a professional sports team.

But Tom Angotti, of Windsor Terrace, a professor of Urban Affairs and Planning at Hunter College, has his doubts.

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As part of the arena plan, Ratner plans to construct 4,500 units of housing, although he has not delineated how much of that would be affordable housing. The downtown plan makes way

CB6 feeling shut out by Ratner

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

When real estate developer Bruce Ratner pulled back the curtain on his colossal \$2.5 billion plan to convert a swath of Prospect Heights into a Frank Gehry-designed neighborhood of apartments and offices centered around a professional basketball arena, there wasn't an empty seat in the house.

Hip-hop star Jay-Z was there. So was Mayor Michael Bloomberg and former NBA great Bernard King. Shirley McKee, chairwoman of Community Board 6, even snuggled an invite.

But nobody asked Community Board 6 to come to the Dec. 10 press conference at Borough Hall, according to the board's district manager, Craig Hammerman.

"That invitation must have been lost in the fax machine," Hammerman said with more than a hint of sarcasm in his voice.

While CB6 covers Park Slope, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, Red Hook and Gowanus, it also extends into one block of Prospect Heights — the very block



Bruce Ratner

that's home to most of the residents and businesses that must be evicted by the state to carry out Ratner's plan.

"When people ask us if we have a role to play, we are uncertain," said Hammerman. "We have no application before us, we simply don't know other than what we read in the newspapers."

Ratner, who purchased the New Jersey Nets for \$300 million last week, wants to bring them to a 22-acre site that he is calling Atlantic Yards, at the corner of Atlantic and Flatbush avenues over the Long Island Rail Yards and the blocks immediately south of them, extending east to Vanderbilt Avenue.

The block bounded by Pacific and Dean streets and Carlton and Vanderbilt avenues is also to be taken under the state's power of eminent domain, and lies within the boundaries of CB8, although fewer residents will be displaced on that block than on the CB6 block. The CB6 block is bounded by Flatbush and Sixth avenues and Pacific and Dean streets.

The arena would be built at the nexus of Park Slope, Fort Greene, Boerum Hill, Prospect Heights and Downtown Brooklyn.

Robert Matthews, chairman of CB8, declined to comment on the plan until the board has had a chance to discuss it, which he said would be next week. He said both the city and Ratner had reached

out to him and he received an invite to the December press conference.

That information left Hammerman scratching his head, wondering why his board was left out in the cold.

Ratner spokesman Barry Baum said CB6 was not intentionally left behind. They were invited, he said, to last week's announcement at BAM of Ratner's purchase of the Nets. "We invited them to this press conference, and we look forward to working with Community Board 6," Baum said.

"We're concerned, a project like it has the clear potential to significantly alter the character of the neighborhood," said Hammerman, who noted that it was unclear what role the board would play in any review of the plan.

When asked about the role of the community, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, a staunch supporter of the arena plan, said Ratner was a "class act" who always sought community input.

But not everybody agrees with that assessment. Ratner certainly received few community kudos for the construction of Atlantic Center, an internally isolating mall on Atlantic Avenue that some neighbors have not so affectionately called "the big ugly."

Despite community pleas to open the mall up on the Fort Greene side, the only entrances are along Atlantic Avenue, leaving residents with a big blank wall, according to Fort Green Association president Howard Pisch.

And, said Hammerman, Ratner came to CB6 "kicking and screaming" when pushed to take the board about his construction of a big-box Lowe's home improvement store at Second Avenue and 12th Street and then took none of the community's concerns into consideration.

Through a spokesman, Ratner told The Brooklyn Papers this week that he would try harder in reaching out to the community on his Atlantic Yards plan.

"We need to increase our efforts to provide adequate forums and outreach and to implement a system whereby there is direct contact for questions to be answered," said spokesman Barry Baum.



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Brooklyn's identity safe without the 'Jersey Nets

The Dodgers didn't make Brooklyn, Brooklyn made the Dodgers. The characteristics that defined the borough's beloved baseball team came not from the players alone but from their interaction with Brooklynites — the spirit, the grit, the work ethic and sense of humor (not to mention accent) unique to this borough.

When the beloved "Bums" left we lost a baseball team, not our identity. The team, however, lost its soul.

Brooklyn's identity is, and has always been, tied into its many and vastly different neighborhoods, ethnicities and cultures. What further sets us apart from the overwhelming crush that is Manhattan, is our low-rise nature. Our blocks are not cluttered or enclosed by towering apart-

ment and office towers, because that's the way we wanted it and our zoning has en-

NEIL SLOANE

forced that notion. Our bridge is an icon; theirs is merely blue. Manhattan is at its loveliest when viewed from Brooklyn; Brooklyn looks best up close.

But now a convergence of plans have been thrust upon this borough that, when taken in sum, will turn Brooklyn into a half-baked version of Manhattan, or "the city," as many of us grew up calling the island across the East River.

One explanation given for rushing the massive Downtown Brooklyn Plan through the city's public review process is that the mayor and governor want to compete with New Jersey for corporate back-office

space. The city can't build competitively priced office space in Manhattan, but in Brooklyn it apparently comes cheap. They build us up only to knock us down. Developers get rich; we get a sports team and unwanted skyscrapers.

We're getting a basketball team we never asked for to replace a baseball team most of us don't remember — and that's supposed to restore an identity we already have. And we're being asked to bear on our great shoulders the city and state's inability to provide affordable office space in Manhattan.

Will someone please tell us what Brooklynites got out of these deals?

Neil Sloane is editor of The Brooklyn Papers. He can be reached via e-mail at newsroom@brooklynpapers.com.

Markowitz: Hagan's got some chutzpah

To the editor:

I joined with Schellie Hagan and her sister Patti when I felt they were right. I opposed private, for-profit homeless shelters built in Prospect Heights by unscrupulous operators that charged the city \$3,000 per month per person. Somehow the Hagans missed my campaign pledge to try to bring a team and an arena to Brooklyn and now that this dream is nearing reality and just so happens to be in their neighborhood, Schellie Hagan wants her \$100 back. That's what we call chutzpah.

But the chutzpah that makes me say *oy vey* is that the Hagans are using the homeless they fought so hard to keep out of Prospect Heights to pad the number of individuals they claim will be forced to move!

—Marty Markowitz, Brooklyn Borough President



Markowitz with NBA great Connie Hawkins and developer Bruce Ratner at a Junior's press conference in October.

Papers' column on target

To the editor:

Talk about hitting the nail on the head! In a few short paragraphs that's exactly what you did [Ed Weintraub's Jan. 24 column, "The real story is the land grab, not the Nets"]. It's about land and making lots of money mostly at the taxpayers' expense. The Nets are just a bit of misdirection.

And you're absolutely right about the New York Times. They wanted *leben* in Manhattan and the powers that be accommodated them.

It's been suggested that Ratner pony up some of the Atlantic Center land that he bought instead of taking someone else's. What a novel idea.

I hope you continue on with this story.

—Barbara Levine, Brooklyn Heights

To the editor:

I wish to thank Ed Weintraub for his column in the Jan. 24 edition. Give us more.

—Lizette Hahn, Downtown

Kudos for Paper

To the editor:

Your Jan. 24 issue should be placed at the doorstep of every resident. It is an even-handed forum for what is happening in the area — one of the few that have been published.

Ed Weintraub's piece on the front page hit the nail on the head.

Frank Gehry's picture in front of the model of the proposed site where the arena is encircled by residential towers makes one wonder what the hell is going on here. How many other cities that have built stadiums and arenas have given developers such carte blanche. I don't recall seeing 60-story towers surrounding the Camden Yards in Baltimore or in photographs of any other facilities around the country.

The developer is merely playing on the nostalgic insecurities of the borough. The notion that Brooklyn needs a professional basketball team to achieve legitimacy is ludicrous. It would be nice but it is not going to turn the pages back 50 years. Brooklyn has survived the loss of its beloved Dodgers and has even thrived. What has allowed this to happen is the quality of life and the sense of community in the borough, which is unique and regenerative.

As a lifelong resident of Brooklyn, the borough president, whose constituency is diverse, should recognize this. South Brooklyn has always offered a more re-

LETTERS

laxed alternative to the frantic quality of life in Manhattan.

The issue of the development plan which Community Board 2 is struggling with ["CB2 panic: Slow down D'aven plan"] should be the concern of all Brooklyn and not just that community.

With all the activity in South Brooklyn why is there no master plan for the borough? Such a plan would allow the entire borough to react to proposed growth. Instead, in order to push through development, our city fathers force communities with limited resources to grapple with significant issues based on the theory of "divide and conquer."

They play on the legitimate concerns of a small neighborhood. The most recent example of this is the rezoning of Park Slope, in which the community's legitimate fear of losing its low-scale contextual fabric was acknowledged and countered with an increase in the zoning along the east side of Fourth Avenue to allow the construction of 12-story buildings.

Shouldn't the person who represents this borough on the City Planning Commission and is appointed by the borough president be looking out for our interests and demanding a coherent, fully reviewed plan rather than letting development occur in such a haphazard way? At least such a plan would incorporate recommendations for changes to the infrastructure necessitated by all the large-scale development that is about to take place. Surely the few projects completed in South Brooklyn in the past 20 years show a lack of coherent planning and implementation.

By the way, the developer of those projects was, and is, Bruce Ratner.

Out city fathers are concerned about the big corporations moving their back-office space to New Jersey and the loss of revenue. So to solve the problem, they have decided to look to the Borough of Brooklyn, which they have neglected for over 100 years and turn us into New Jersey East, with back-office space clogging our main arteries and taxing our systems.

To make the action complete, they have even opened the door to moving New Jersey's basketball team to Brooklyn.

Wake up, Brooklyn!

—Richard Ferraro, AIA, Park Slope

Anything for us?

To the editor:

Enthusiasm abounds for the Nets stadium in Brooklyn — amongst aging male politicians, still whining about the Dodgers, and Manhattanites who'll probably never attend a game. In Brooklyn, the feeling is down.

Developer Bruce Ratner's gargantuan design, as misplaced here as it would be in Greenwich Village, strangles the revenue-generating Brooklyn renaissance.

Furthermore, Ratner demands the city use "eminent domain" to evict 10 residential blocks for his private, for-profit enterprise. Is this America?

Ratner insists two-thirds of his development be 17 luxury condo-office towers. The MTA's gift of the development rights above the towers is otherwise worth \$1 billion. The city pays for endless infrastructure improvements. Doesn't NYC need this money?

Besides enormous construction subsidies, it'll receive tax-free status.

People have limited cash to spend on entertainment. If not at the stadium, they'll spend it at other, smaller venues. One's that pay tax.

It's redistribution of wealth — from residents, small business and taxpayers to an individual billionaire.

—Jonathan Stern, Fort Greene

To the editor:

I am outraged by the purchase of the Nets and how this outcome will affect the residents and small businesses who have been in the community for years. They are basically being thrown out. Is there nothing that can be done to protect them, not to mention the actual buildings being torn down that are of historical significance? It would seem that the priorities of the city are completely backwards when a sport becomes more important than the lives of the people.

—Wendy Stefanello, Gowanus

Send us a letter

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By e-mail: Newsroom@BrooklynPapers.com

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Hoop dream a nightmare for residents, businesses in path of Ratner project

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Mike Leonardos has been serving hot coffee and two-egg specials at the Silver Spoon diner on Flatbush Avenue for more than 20 years.

The eatery sits just across the avenue from where real estate mogul Bruce Ratner plans to build a 19,000-seat basketball arena for his recently purchased Nets, an arena he'd surround with office towers and, down the line, residential ones. Gov. George Pataki, Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Borough President Marry Markowitz have all championed Ratner's plan.

So while pictures of Markowitz and former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani grace the walls of his restaurant, Mike says these days he's had it up to here with politicians.

"This is a tricky deal," Leonardos said, looking up at a photograph of Markowitz, whose idea it was to bring professional basketball to Brooklyn.

Leonardos owns the diner along with his brother Paul, and doesn't think an arena would do anything for his business.

"They're going to have a train station right beneath it, nobody's going to come here," he said of the Atlantic Terminal transit hub that would likely be connected to the arena underground.

While the Silver Spoon would not be torn down to build the arena, just across the street, and for about three blocks into Prospect Heights, approximately 500 residents and businesses would not be so lucky.

In order to construct the sweeping Atlantic Yards project, named for the Long Island Rail Road yards upon which about half of the 21-acre project would be built, Ratner plans to ask the state to use its powers of eminent domain to raze nearly three square blocks of private land.

"I've been here since '80 — it's like my hometown," Leonardos said of the neighborhood, adding that he did not want to see his friends lose their homes and businesses.

Ratner has vowed to fairly compensate property owners and relocate displaced renters, although under eminent domain he only has to pay appraised



Mike Leonardos, owner of the Silver Spoon diner, at 216 Flatbush Ave., has owned the restaurant since 1980. Although the arena development will not displace him, he believes it will be bad for business and the neighborhood.



Daniel Goldstein, a graphic designer, sits in his condominium apartment at 636 Pacific St., which would be demolished under the arena plan. He moved to the building with his fiancée in June 2003 in hopes of settling there.

value, which would be lower than market value. But renters face much more uncertainty since the state does not guarantee any relocation assistance, according to Michael Rikon, an eminent domain attorney.

Among the ranks of the displaced would be famed sculptor Louise Bourgeois, noted violin maker Sam Zygmuntowicz, two luxury condominium buildings, two homeless shelters that neighborhood activists and elected officials fought to keep out of the area, a beloved Prohibition-era bar, and a Holocaust survivor who recently lost her husband and another move alone.

Included among them is

Joseph Pastore, who several neighbors described as "a real Brooklyn character." Each day, Pastore puts on his black cap and walks the blocks of Prospect Heights, chatting with neighbors and picking up old cameras, records and household items that others have cast away.

Since 1967, Pastore has lived in a small, rent-stabilized studio apartment along Dean Street between Flatbush and Sixth avenues.

Raised in a number of orphanages, including the St. Vincent's Home nearby, Pastore, 59, considers Dean Street his true home. Talking to a reporter outside, he can't go more than a few minutes without greeting a neighbor.

"This is my neighborhood, and it's a beautiful neighborhood," said Pastore, standing outside the four-story, painted-yellow brick building.

"I was raised as an orphan all my life, so whatever I did it was all on my own," he said. "Don't get me wrong, I had friends. I was raised with 270 kids."

"I have close friends like brothers, just like Ratner and Pataki," Pastore said, noting with a hint of sarcasm the friendship between the developer and governor, who attended Columbia Law School together.

Now Ratner is counting on his old friend to condemn that block of Dean Street as if it was blighted, so he can build a sports complex and office towers. When asked what he would do if he lost his \$400-a-month apartment, Pastore, a former youth counselor who lives on a fixed income, said he did not know.

And he isn't alone. Just behind Pastore's apart-

ment most people would call urban blight.

Less than a year ago, Daniel Goldstein and his fiancée, Echo Eggebrecht, purchased a 1,300-square-foot, three-bedroom apartment on the seventh floor.

Looking out at the sweeping views of Brooklyn, with the Verrazano Narrows Bridge in the distance, Goldstein, who spent five years looking for a place to buy, says he can't believe he may have to leave the apartment.

"It's the first home we're making together and we intended to keep it for a long, long time," said Goldstein, a 34-year-old graphic artist who works out of his apartment. Eggebrecht has an art studio in the apartment.

Both Eggebrecht and Goldstein, who says he is optimistic about their chances of fighting the plan, have joined with Develop Don't Destroy, a group of tenants and owners in the area who are fighting the Ratner plan. They have retained an attorney, Jack Lester, who has represented several groups of Manhattan residents fighting quality-of-life problems.

While planning a wedding is normally stressful, Goldstein says it is infinitely compounded by the threat of losing your home. He said the ordeal had even put a stress on the couple's relationship as they plan their May wedding, set for the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

"I may be the minority on this, but I like the tracks. I like the rugged urban feel of the neighborhood," said Goldstein, looking out his window at the railroad tracks and the traffic making its way, slowly, down Flatbush Avenue.

Just to the south of the tracks is a Mobil gas station, one of the first in the city to offer a compressed natural gas filling station.

"This is a neighborhood business," said John Tsao, who has owned the gas station for 25 years.

If Atlantic Yards gets the



John Tsao stands in front of the Mobil Gas Station at 195 Flatbush Ave., which he has owned for 25 years. Under the current Nets arena plan, Tsao's station would be demolished, leaving him and his eight employees out of work.



Joseph Pastore stands in front of 473 Dean St., his home since 1967, which would be torn down under the arena plan.

green light, the Mobil station will be razed. According to site plans, it stands approximately where arena bathrooms would go.

As Tsao takes a break from working in the auto shop, he chats about the demerits of microwaves with a customer buying a cup of tea in the gas station's mini-mart.

He greets neighbors by first name.

If he is forced to close his business, Tsao, a Brooklyn native who lives in Park Slope and attended Brooklyn Technical High School, just a few blocks away, said he did not know what he would do.

"I'll be lost," he said, explaining that he has a home mortgage to pay and two kids in college. Not to mention eight employees who will be out of jobs.

Watching taxi cabs fuel up on their way back to Manhattan, Tsao sighed and said, "It's a shame that after spending a lifetime in Brooklyn they can come in and tell you to take a hike."

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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

January 31, 2004



The Sundance kids

Indie filmmakers did us proud at annual Park City, Utah festival

By Marian Masone
for The Brooklyn Papers

The gift shop in the Salt Lake City airport is called West of Brooklyn. Did the owner know that there would be so many Brooklyn-based filmmakers attending this year's Sundance Film Festival, down the road in Park City?

During the festival, which ran Jan. 16-25, you couldn't swing the press credentials hanging around your neck without hitting a director from Brooklyn. From first timers to veterans of the film festival wars, the borough was well represented once again.

Films at Sundance are organized into sections, and the largest representation of Brooklyn filmmakers was in the documentary competition, where five of them had films vying for the best documentary prize. All are political in tone.

Park Slope resident Barak Goodman's **"The Fight"** seems at first glance to be a sports film about the famous rivalry between Joe Louis, a black American, and German Max Schmeling. But he highlights the political and nationalistic pressures put on the men by their respective countries, in addition to exploring racism in the U.S. and anti-Semitism in Hitler's pre-WWII Germany.

Goodman has also made films for Public Broadcasting's "Frontline." **"The Fight"** is his second film to show at Sundance.

"I'm a big sports fan, and I love boxing, so this subject was particularly appealing to me," he said.

Powerful interviews are part of what made this film such a strong contender. Goodman found friends of Louis and others who witnessed the fights.

"They were easy to get to talk, but much harder to find," Goodman said, but in Germany "people were more cautious talking about Schmeling. Louis, though, is such a hero, especially to African-Americans, that folks here loved to talk."

Although Schmeling is still living in Germany, he declined to be interviewed.

"Deadline," a film documenting the process that led to Illinois Gov. George Ryan commuting all the state's death sentences in

"This...is all that any filmmaker can hope for — to touch the viewers sitting in the audience."

— Williamsburg's Joshua Marston on winning the Sundance audience award for best dramatic feature



Caught in the middle: Shokriya Yaghi and her sons in "Persons of Interest," a documentary co-directed by Tobias Perse of Fort Greene.



Brooklyn in Utah: Brooklyn filmmakers and films set in Brooklyn flooded this year's Sundance Film Festival including: (top left to right) "Everyday People" featuring Bridget Barkan; "Maria Full of Grace" featuring Catalina Sandoval Moreno with director Joshua Marston; and "Govanus Brooklyn" starring Shareeka Epps and Karen Chilton. (At left) "Lbs." writer-star Carmine Famiglietti and (above) director Matthew Bonifacio.

January 2003, was made by co-directors Kirsten Johnson of Williamsburg and Katy Chevigny of Cobble Hill, till marriage took her away). In fact, more than commuting the sentences, Ryan gave a blanket clemency to the more than 150 prisoners on that state's death row.

Both filmmakers have backgrounds in political and human rights-oriented work, and they happened upon these events while they were researching the Furman vs. Georgia 1972 decision that had abolished the death penalty in the United States until it was reinstated in 1976.

"One of our advisors told us of the clemency hearings that were going on in Chicago," Johnson told GO Brooklyn. "He basically said, 'Get on a plane and get over there.'" They filmed about 18 clemency hearings — Ryan had ordered one-hour clemency hearings for all death row inmates — which presented "a remarkable opportunity," Johnson said.

The first couple of days it was standard coverage. All the media was there. But afterwards, the mainstream media left, and it was just us. It was amazing — we were allowed to treat it as a narrative film and move around the room with our camera, and things would just happen as we were filming [such as ardent pleas to spare the lives of loved ones], she said.

When the governor decided to hold these hearings (having the notion that there were big problems with the capital punishment system in the state), he had a true deadline — his last day in office — and he had to make a decision by then.

Johnson spoke of the defining experience of the clemency hearings. "The governor didn't do it lightly — you knew that. They started by finding those who were actually

innocent and stopping their executions, but then realized that there was a problem with the entire justice system."

As for Sundance, Johnson felt that there was strong support for the film.

"We were delighted by how many people stayed after the screening for questions. They had some surprising responses," she said. An NBC executive who attended one of the screenings told her it was the fairest and most balanced view of the death penalty that he had seen.

Director Shola Lynch doesn't live in Brooklyn (although as a teenage track star she ran many races at Pratt Institute), but the subject of her documentary, **"Chisholm '72: Unbought and Unbossed"** is about a Brooklyn original — Shirley Chisholm who, in 1968, became the first black woman elected to Congress.

Lynch's film follows Chisholm's run for the presidency in 1972, which inspired her to run for Congress, but she was dropped when they discovered, through her campaign, that they could make a difference. One recalls how inspiring Chisholm was — this petite woman, looking less like a radical than anyone you can imagine, trying to wrest politics from the power brokers, and put it in the hands of the people.

Lynch was moved to make the film when she heard of Chisholm's birthday on the radio. And how she located her subject could be a film in itself.

"I was at a bar with some girlfriends, and we started chatting up this cute guy," said Lynch. "Turns out his mother had just hosted a barbecue for Chisholm in Florida, where the former congresswoman now lives."

"Persons of Interest," from Tobias Perse, of Fort Greene (and Alison Maclean of See **SUNDANCE** on page 18

DANCE



Dance party

Bill T. Jones/Amie Zane Dance Company celebrates its 20th anniversary beginning Feb. 3 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music with a rare look back consisting of four repertory works and three New York premieres, including a new solo performed by Jones, "Chaconne."

This dance company is making its seventh appearance at BAM, where it all began in 1982 with the world premiere of "Intuitive Momentum," a collaboration with jazz drummer Max Roach at the BAM Next Wave: New Masters Series.

Among the premieres in program A, on Feb. 3 at 7:30 pm, is "Reading, Mercy and The Artificial Nigger" (based on Flannery O'Connor's 1955 short story "The Artificial Nigger") which includes O'Connor's text read aloud by Susan Sarandon as well as piano, strings and electronic score by Daniel Bernard Roumain.

Program B's repertory lineup will include "The Gift/No God Logic," on Feb. 5 at 7:30 pm, with the company joined by former members Arthur Aviles, Sean Curran and Heidi Lasky — the work's original performers. The Feb. 5 performance will also feature special musical guests Cassandra Wilson, Vernon Reid and DJ Spooky.

There will be an additional performance of premieres will be performed Feb. 7 at 7:30 pm.

A BAM dialogue with Bill T. Jones, his collaborators and company members — free with that evening's performance ticket — follows the Feb. 5 and Feb. 6 shows.

The Brooklyn Academy of Music is located at 30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place in Fort Greene. Tickets are \$25 and \$50. For tickets, call (718) 636-4100 or visit www.bam.org.

— Lisa J. Curtis

OPERA

Youth culture

You don't have to convince Jay D. Meetze (pictured) of the worthiness of Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro."

"There are many reasons it's considered one of the greatest operas ever written," the artistic director of the Opera Company of Brooklyn says. "The music is spectacular, it's appropriate for younger voices, it's full of timeless comedy and the purity of the characters is remarkable ... then there's the second act finale."

As if to prove his point, Meetze and his company will present a fully staged, traditional production of Mozart's immortal comic opera Feb. 6 and Feb. 8 at NYC College of Technology's Voorhees Theatre.

Meetze, who is also conducting, explains his plans for performing such an immortal work of art.

"We cut a little bit of the recitative parts and we cut a couple of arias," Meetze says. "I do believe opera should be done in the original form, but younger listeners have shorter attention spans, so I take quicker tempi, but never so fast that it makes singers speed up too much. And with Mozart, it's not such a big deal, because he was a young composer." (Mozart was 30 when "Figaro" premiered, five years before his death.)

Alluding to disagreements with the musicians' union over using a "virtual orchestra" for previous performances, Meetze describes his "Figaro" orchestra: "We have a wonderful, 10-piece orchestra, a wind quartet and a complement of strings." But he makes no apologies for using enhancements — Sinfonia virtual orchestra technology — to help play Mozart's sublime score.

"Technology allows a small company like us to present these great operas," he insists.

The Opera Company of Brooklyn presents Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro" on Feb. 6 at 8 pm, and Feb. 8 at 3 pm, at the Voorhees Theatre, 186 Jay St. at Tillary Street in Downtown Brooklyn. Tickets are \$25, \$20 Brooklyn residents, \$10 students with ID and \$5 Brooklyn students with ID. For more information, visit www.operabrooklyn.com or call (212) 567-3283.

— Kevin Filipski

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What's inside that counts

Grand Central is good but still working out the kinks

By Tina Barry
for The Brooklyn Papers

Some restaurants open like Athena popping forth from Zeus' head—fully formed and ready for battle. Others, like Grand Central, a restaurant and bar in Williamsburg, take longer to evolve.

Opened just three months ago, Grand Central hasn't reached the heights its owners, Jesse and Maria Alverio, hoped for. Their first chef, Brian Perry, formerly of Al Di La in Park Slope, stuck around just long enough to put a few panini on the menu before leaving with his butterscotch caramel cheesecake.

Justin Avery, the new man in the kitchen, a former military sergeant from Louisiana with the buzz cut, "Yes ma'm" and "No ma'm" to prove it—isn't quite a chef yet. Working behind the stove is new to him, and while he's earnest, his output needs fine-tuning.

The waitress, charming but a little green, handed us menus as we entered with an "Um, here."

And Grand Central isn't a neighborhood hangout yet either, although the Alverios designate a different activity each evening hoping to draw the locals inside—witness the two guys shooting pool during a Thursday evening

"tournament."

The Alverios' first venture, The PourHouse, a bar in Williamsburg that opened in 1999, does not have a kitchen. When PourHouse patrons get hungry, they're offered takeout menus so they can drink beer and have pizza, too—delivered right to their barstools.

"[With Grand Central] the goal was to offer the neighborhood another bar where pool players and poets would feel right at home, but with much more," says Jesse.

Once the stick-wielders and word-smiths realize Grand Central is both a restaurant and a bar—there was some confusion at first, as up until Dec. 21, when the dining room tables were traded for so-

fas, a passerby peering into the window would see a long room with only tables, they'll be able over the 12 draught beers and 19 bottled ones, and a small but well-chosen wine list. In the spring, when the garden is complete, patrons can sit outdoors with a glass of pinot grigio and panino.

While indoors, I'd pass on the winter menu's green salad of fresh mixed lettuce in an under-salted dressing that needed vinegar. Instead, go for the shrimp dip with crisp slices of Italian bread. It's cocktail party fare circa 1965—served in a small white bowl atop a



Take a dip: (Top left) Grand Central owner Jesse Alverio near the bowling game in his Williamsburg restaurant-lounge. (Top right) Chef Justin Avery's shrimp dip, made with shrimp, cocktail sauce, horseradish, cream cheese, Monterey cheese, cheddar cheese and scallions, is paired with a Louis Jadot Macon Chardonnay. (At left) The Nena Cuban panino is enjoyed with Arriba Turbodo dark brown ale.



large platter ringed with the toast. The dip is pretty in pink, creamy with an after-bite of horseradish and Worcester-shire sauce. The only thing missing is a sprinkling of paprika; no '60s hostess would omit that touch.

A few garnishes on the main course playing would go a long way. Williamsburg is (or was) an artists' community, so visuals are important.

On its own, the panino, a pressed sandwich and Grand Central's one entree offering, isn't much to look at. Unlike other sandwiches where the layers of filling are visible, a panino's sealed edges cover most of its ingredients—essentially, it's a beige square cut into two triangles. To make it appealing, the sandwich needs a little garnish, either a small mound of greens drizzled with tart vinaigrette, a few slices of ripe fruit, maybe a rambles of coleslaw, even a pickle, to enhance its looks.

Still, it's what's inside that really counts. And what's inside Grand Central's panino is pretty good. Leg of

lamb is braised in port wine and topped with browned sage butter and Swiss cheese. The wine tempers the taste of the meat and the butter and cheese add a bit of luxury.

With a glass of cold beer, the Nena Cuban, or Cuban sandwich, of tender, sweet pork shoulder, slices of ham, Swiss cheese and pickle topped with spicy, cumín-flavored mojo dressing, makes a fine lunch dinner.

The portobello sandwich of caramelized onions, roasted peppers, slices of mozzarella and thick pieces of mushroom, would be better with a smear of pesto or something garlicky to elevate it from the doldrums.

For total carbohydrate meltdown, there's the s'more dessert, 15 more, as in, "I want some more." If you joined the scouts, this particular sweet—chocolate and marshmallows sandwiched between graham crackers—will be nostalgic. If you were too cool for any of that, you may want to skip this gooey dessert. It's a s'more all right—a grilled milk chocolate sandwich spread with marshmallow fluff—that doesn't cut it as an adult dessert.

Right now, Grand Central feels like anything but which isn't a bad thing. In a neighborhood where restaurants have indoor pools and every bartender shakes a flavor-of-the-week martini, it's still refreshing to find a quiet place for a beer and a decent sandwich.

Game plan

Instead of parking yourself in front of your TV on Super Bowl Sunday with a slice of mediocre pizza and a beer, why not go to 200 Fifth in Park Slope where you can park yourself in front of 10 TVs and enjoy an all-night open bar, the camaraderie of your fellow Brooklynites and an all-you-can-eat buffet for \$40?

While you're cheering for either the New England Patriots, the Carolina Panthers or the megabucks commercials, you can sample one—or all—of the restaurant's 40 beers in bottles and on tap including Magic Hat No. 9 (a delicious brew that tastes faintly of apricot). Double Diamond and Bluepoint. Pair the booze with eight different hot dishes—including must-have-for-

football-watching food like Buffalo wings, meatball hoagies and beef kabobs—and you're set for Super Sunday.

The debauchery begins at 6:30 pm, on Feb. 1, and ends "when-ever," says owner Mark Gerbush.

It's a bargain, sport. 200 Fifth (200 Fifth Ave. between Union and Berkeley streets in Park Slope) accepts Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover. Entrees: \$6.50-\$17.95. The restaurant serves dinner seven nights a week and lunch on Fridays, from 11:30 am to 3:30 pm. Brunch is served Saturdays and Sundays, from 11 am to 4 pm. For information, call (718) 638-0023 and (718) 638-2925.

—Tina Barry

BROOKLYN Bites

Neighborhood Dining Guide

This week's
BROOKLYN HEIGHTS/
DOWNTOWN

Alicia's Cafe & Eatery

10 Columbia Pl. at Joralemon Street, (718) 532-0069 (DC, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$13-\$17. * Owner Wynne Anderson opened Alicia's, on charming, residential Columbia Place, in October 2001. It's worth the trip off the beaten track—down at the end of Joralemon Street—to get to Chef Sebastian Chou's French-Thai-American menu.

"It's an eclectic menu, but we're French in terms of our sauces and presentation," explained Anderson. Among the temptations on Chou's menu are roasted lamb loin with thyme flowers, sugar snaps and gratin dauphinois (roasted potatoes with sour cream and garlic); and grilled salmon and jumbo shrimp with steamed vegetables in a saffron broth. The cannelloni stuffed with asparagus and crab-meat in a shrimp sauce is a memorable starter.

Come back for brunch to try the pancake Napoleon: pancakes layered with warm fruit, whipped cream and served with a rum-butter sauce. Desserts include chocolate fondant cake with coffee-flavored custard and apples and pears coated with caramel in a reversed pie.

Open for lunch Monday through Friday, dinner Tuesday through Sunday and weekend brunch from 10 am to 4 pm.

Archives

333 Adams St. at Tillary Street, (718) 222-6543. 2010 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$8.95-\$18. Archives offers a wide variety of seafood, pasta, poultry, beef and vegetable dishes for every taste. A typically hearty entrée by executive chef Walter Flender is the barbecued Australian rack of lamb with grilled potatoes and mixed greens.

Other indulgences include the Sunday Champagne brunch. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Balzar

60 Henry St. at Cranberry Street, (718) 243-2010 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$8.95-\$18. Chef Miguel Leon describes the cuisine of Balzar, which opened in the summer of 2003, as "a little Mediterranean, a little Italian, a little French."

Enjoy tapes in the bar and lounge area. A standout appetizer is the eggplant rollatini filled with fresh ricotta and mushrooms, and the elaborate bouillabaisse served in a martini glass. The décor features wood tables, pewter chandeliers and a rustic, tiled floor, as well as leopard print settees.

Balzar offers a weekend brunch menu, available from 11 am to 3 pm. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Gage & Tollner

372 Fulton St. at Jay Street, (718) 875-5181. www.GageandTollner.com (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$14.95-\$29.95

Gage & Tollner, an atmospheric Brooklyn landmark that dates back to 1879, features arched mirrors, red velvet wallpaper and brass gas-lit chandeliers. Restaurant Joseph Chirco took over in 1995 and completely redesigned the interior to its original splendor. Whether you love a great steak or you're a seafood fan, Gage & Tollner has what you're craving with old-fashioned, top-notch service. By the time the dessert cart is rolled to your table, you'll be making plans for your next visit. Free valet parking.

Henry's End

44 Henry St. at Cranberry Street, (718) 834-1776 (AmEx, DC, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$15.95-\$22.95

Located just a couple of blocks from the Brooklyn Heights promenade, Henry's End, a casual neighborhood restaurant, promises a wonderful meal.

Mark Lahm creates entrees like chicken with pears, walnuts, and blue cheese, and duck with

* Full review available at

brooklynpapers.com

Abbreviation Key: AmEx=American Express; DC=Diner's Club; Disc=Discover Card; MC=MasterCard; Visa=Visa Card



Burgers and 18 beers on tap at the Waterfront Ale House.

wild mushrooms. Warm up with the New Orleans turtle soup with shrimp. Make sure to visit Henry's End in the fall and winter (October-March) for the Wild Game Festival, where exotic cuisine like the herb-crusted elk and pepper-crusted venison are legendary. Open daily for dinner.

Kapadokya

142 Montague St. at Henry Street, (718) 875-2211 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$11.50-\$19.95. *

The Turkish restaurant Kapadokya is a thrilling change of pace for lunch or dinner on Montague Street. Take in the antique, imported décor and furnishings, some as old as 150 years. The staff dresses in elaborate costumes, enhancing the feeling that you're no longer in Brooklyn. And have you ever smoked a hookah, a la the caterpillar in Alice in Wonderland? Here's your chance—the bar offers dinner patrons a hookah-huff of flavored tobacco for \$13.95, to be smoked al fresco when the patio is open.

The food is Middle Eastern in style, with smoked and sweet flavors that make the chicken, beef, lamb and vegetable dishes distinctly Turkish. Top off your meal with a famous Turkish coffee, a tiny cup of thick, rich bitter java.

Enjoy the belly dancing on Friday and Saturday nights.

La Traviata

139 Montague St. at Clinton Street, 161 Joralemon St. at Clinton Street, (718) 858-4100. www.latraviatogo.com (AmEx, DC, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$9.50-\$14.50.

This is a great father-and-son act. Ralph Tormaso Jr. and his dad take a personal interest in their popular Brooklyn Heights eatery, and this interest can be seen in every detail—from the marble fountain in the rear patio to the friendly staff and ample menu. La Traviata offers all those dishes that have made Italy a gourmand's delight—chicken alla Marsala, veal scaloppini, shrimp scampi. Lighter fare includes thin-crust pizza with an extensive selection of toppings. Delivery service via phone or the Web site. Sidewalk cafe seats available in season.

Liechee Nut

162 Montague St. at Clinton Street, downtown, (718) 522-5565 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$6-\$12.

This Brooklyn Heights Chinese restaurant has had several locations, owners and chefs, but through-out it has maintained the high quality that keeps customers coming back for over 20 years. Owner Jerry Shen has dedicated himself to keeping the restaurant's fare authentic. Chef Eric Wu cooks in both Szechuan and Cantonese styles and prepares a broad spectrum of dishes that include Cantonese-style beef short ribs and the house special a generous plate of jumbo shrimp sautéed with Chinese vegetables and liechee nuts—which, by the way, are not nuts at all, but sweet and succulent fruit.

Waterfront Ale House

155 Atlantic Ave. at Henry Street, (718) 522-3794. www.waterfrontalehouse.com (AmEx, MC, DC, Visa) Entrees: \$10.95-\$20.95. *

Since 1989, the Waterfront Ale House has embraced its pub status, offering 18 beers on tap and 50 to 60 different bottles. But with the help of local chef Jim Takacs, they are able to go well beyond the usual bar fare. There are the obligatory chicken wings and fried calamari, but more sophisticated choices like venison and black bean chili with tequila-cilantro sour cream or a burger made from Kobe beef. Owner Sam Barbieri is a barbecue maven (all meats are smoked in-house), so do miss the ribs and barbecue chicken served with sweet potato fries.

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Where to Go

Compiled by Susan Rosenthal

Sat. Jan 31

PERFORMANCE

DANCE: Cynthia King Dance Studio presents a program "Changing Channels." Show features TV-inspired themes and music. \$15, \$10 kids under 10. 7pm. Fulton Ferry Landing, (718) 624-0083.

SO'S NIGHT: Our Lady of Angels hosts a fundraiser featuring a duo-wop performance by The Capris. \$50 includes attire please. 7:30 pm. 37 74th St. (718) 492-1006.

BARGE MUSIC: presents a chamber music concert of all Bach. Suites No. 1, 3 and 5. \$35. 7:30 pm. Fulton Ferry Landing, (718) 624-0083.

ST. ANN'S WAREHOUSE: presents "Hiroshima Maiden." Puppet theater dramatizes the true story of the Hiroshima Maidens, a group of Japanese women deformed by the nuclear blast. \$25. 8 pm. 38 Water St. (718) 254-8779.

BROOKLYN CONSERVATORY: The Four Bags perform music for children, guitar, woodwinds and trombone. \$10. \$5 seniors and students. 8 pm. 38 Seventh Ave. (718) 622-3300.

THEATER: The National Theater of the United States of America presents "What's That on My Head?" Piece presents the history of American theater through the lens of a trans-temporal piece. \$15. 8 pm. West Arts Center, 70 Washington St. (718) 614-6077.

DANCE: Williamsburg Art Nexus presents "Kakakake" and "Defacto." Dance performance. "Cinderella." \$12. 8 pm. 205 N. Seventh St. (718) 599-7997.

SHAKESPEARE: Waterford Bridge Theater Company presents "Twelfth Night or What You Will." \$15. \$10 students. 8 pm. 475 Third Ave. (212) 502-0796.

FLAMENCO MUSIC: Meison Flamenco presents dance and music featuring La Concha and Pedro Cortes. 8:30 pm. 10 pm. 486 Sixth Ave. (718) 625-7177.

JAZZ: Magnolia Restaurant presents jazz with Jessica Mark. No cover. 10 pm. \$5 before midnight. \$7 after midnight. Scopolio Ristorante, 63 Lafayette Ave. (212) 501-5107.

GALLERY PLAYERS: presents "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown." \$15. \$10 students. 8 pm. 199 14th St. (718) 596-0547.

CHILDREN

CAMP FAIR: Parents and children with disabilities are invited to learn about camp options for summer 2004. 10 am to 3 pm. Church of St. Paul the Apostle, 405 W. 59th St. (212) 672-4650. Free.

BARNES AND NOBLE: Author and illustrator Tori Rexford reads children's books including "The Feel Good Book." 11 am. 106 Court St. (718) 246-4158. Free.

ARTY FACTS: Brooklyn Museum of Art invites kids to "Animals All Around." \$6 adults, free for members and children 12 and under. 11 am and 2 pm. SoLo, 4 pm. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-5200.

PUPPETWORKS: "Rumpelstiltskin" by The Brothers Grimm. \$6. \$7 adults. 4 pm and 6 pm. 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm. 338 Sixth Ave. (718) 965-3391.

BROOKLYN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM: Celebrate Chinese New Year and the Year of the Monkey with a dragon parade and Chinese tea party. \$15. \$10 for members. 1 pm to 5 pm. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 735-4400. ext. 126.

SCAVENGER HUNT: Wanton Adventures hosts a hunt. Bring a good pair of walking shoes. \$25 includes museum admission. 3 pm to 5 pm. 200 Brooklyn Museum. 200 Eastern Parkway. (212) 726-1529.

KIDS OUTBACK: Brooklyn Arts Exchange hosts annual event featuring work by young creators. 7 pm to 7:58 pm. 55 members. 7:30 pm. 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 632-0101.

OTHER

WRITE A PLAY: Young playwrights in the National Playwriting Competition learn a teacher training institute. Learn how to use playwriting as a tool to promote literacy and encourage expression. NYC educators, grades 3 to 12, can receive professional staff development credit for participation. \$225. 12 hours. (Call) 212 594-5440.

ACCESS FOR WOMEN: Women are invited to get information about the technical training for jobs in technology. 9 am to 1 pm. Northeast Asian Cultural Center, 186 Jay St. (718) 552-1134. Free.

READING: Brooklyn Public Library, Central branch, presents "Words and Music of Love and Lunacy." Enjoy readings from the works of Brooklyn authors when put to the music of Mozart, Schubert and Glass. Performed by members of the Brooklyn Philharmonic. 4 pm. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2100. Free.

UPPERWARE PARTY: Borsenbush Volunteer Ambulance Service hosts a fundraiser. 7 pm. St. Mary Mother of Jesus RC Church, 85th Street between 23rd and 24th avenues. Call. 212 357-5032.

SPEED DATING: Acquire up to 20 dates in one night for men ages 35 to 46 and women ages 30 to 45. \$35. Reservations required. 7:30 pm. Captain Walter, Sheepshead Bay. (718) 757-4933.

MUSIC EXTRAVAGANZA: Office Ops presents art, music and video performances by Monrook, Mark Nicotia, Kofsky, Adam T. Rauh, and many others. \$15. 8 pm. 199 14th St. (718) 596-0547.

COUNTRY WESTERN DANCE: At Madison Jewish Center. \$22.50 for members. 8 pm. 2891 Neostadt Ave. Reservations necessary. (718) 336-5944.

SUN. FEB 1

PERFORMANCE

CBBC: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts presents pianist Mark Levinson. \$20. 2 pm. Walk Whitman Theater, Brooklyn College, one block from the intersection of Flatbush and

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BROOKLYN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM: Celebrate Chinese New Year and the Year of the Monkey with a dragon parade and Chinese tea party. \$15. \$10 for members. 1 pm to 5 pm. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 735-4400. ext. 126.

SCAVENGER HUNT: Wanton Adventures hosts a hunt. Bring a good pair of walking shoes. \$25 includes museum admission. 3 pm to 5 pm. 200 Brooklyn Museum. 200 Eastern Parkway. (212) 726-1529.

KIDS OUTBACK: Brooklyn Arts Exchange hosts annual event featuring work by young creators. 7 pm to 7:58 pm. 55 members. 7:30 pm. 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 632-0101.

OTHER

WRITE A PLAY: Young playwrights in the National Playwriting Competition learn a teacher training institute. Learn how to use playwriting as a tool to promote literacy and encourage expression. NYC educators, grades 3 to 12, can receive professional staff development credit for participation. \$225. 12 hours. (Call) 212 594-5440.

ACCESS FOR WOMEN: Women are invited to get information about the technical training for jobs in technology. 9 am to 1 pm. Northeast Asian Cultural Center, 186 Jay St. (718) 552-1134. Free.

READING: Brooklyn Public Library, Central branch, presents "Words and Music of Love and Lunacy." Enjoy readings from the works of Brooklyn authors when put to the music of Mozart, Schubert and Glass. Performed by members of the Brooklyn Philharmonic. 4 pm. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2100. Free.

UPPERWARE PARTY: Borsenbush Volunteer Ambulance Service hosts a fundraiser. 7 pm. St. Mary Mother of Jesus RC Church, 85th Street between 23rd and 24th avenues. Call. 212 357-5032.

SPEED DATING: Acquire up to 20 dates in one night for men ages 35 to 46 and women ages 30 to 45. \$35. Reservations required. 7:30 pm. Captain Walter, Sheepshead Bay. (718) 757-4933.

MUSIC EXTRAVAGANZA: Office Ops presents art, music and video performances by Monrook, Mark Nicotia, Kofsky, Adam T. Rauh, and many others. \$15. 8 pm. 199 14th St. (718) 596-0547.

COUNTRY WESTERN DANCE: At Madison Jewish Center. \$22.50 for members. 8 pm. 2891 Neostadt Ave. Reservations necessary. (718) 336-5944.

SUN. FEB 1

PERFORMANCE

CBBC: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts presents pianist Mark Levinson. \$20. 2 pm. Walk Whitman Theater, Brooklyn College, one block from the intersection of Flatbush and

Sat. Jan 31

PERFORMANCE

DANCE: Cynthia King Dance Studio presents a program "Changing Channels." Show features TV-inspired themes and music. \$15, \$10 kids under 10. 7pm. Fulton Ferry Landing, (718) 624-0083.

SO'S NIGHT: Our Lady of Angels hosts a fundraiser featuring a duo-wop performance by The Capris. \$50 includes attire please. 7:30 pm. 37 74th St. (718) 492-1006.

BARGE MUSIC: presents a chamber music concert of all Bach. Suites No. 1, 3 and 5. \$35. 7:30 pm. Fulton Ferry Landing, (718) 624-0083.

ST. ANN'S WAREHOUSE: presents "Hiroshima Maiden." Puppet theater dramatizes the true story of the Hiroshima Maidens, a group of Japanese women deformed by the nuclear blast. \$25. 8 pm. 38 Water St. (718) 254-8779.

BROOKLYN CONSERVATORY: The Four Bags perform music for children, guitar, woodwinds and trombone. \$10. \$5 seniors and students. 8 pm. 38 Seventh Ave. (718) 622-3300.

THEATER: The National Theater of the United States of America presents "What's That on My Head?" Piece presents the history of American theater through the lens of a trans-temporal piece. \$15. 8 pm. West Arts Center, 70 Washington St. (718) 614-6077.

DANCE: Williamsburg Art Nexus presents "Kakakake" and "Defacto." Dance performance. "Cinderella." \$12. 8 pm. 205 N. Seventh St. (718) 599-7997.

SHAKESPEARE: Waterford Bridge Theater Company presents "Twelfth Night or What You Will." \$15. \$10 students. 8 pm. 475 Third Ave. (212) 502-0796.

FLAMENCO MUSIC: Meison Flamenco presents dance and music featuring La Concha and Pedro Cortes. 8:30 pm. 10 pm. 486 Sixth Ave. (718) 625-7177.

JAZZ: Magnolia Restaurant presents jazz with Jessica Mark. No cover. 10 pm. \$5 before midnight. \$7 after midnight. Scopolio Ristorante, 63 Lafayette Ave. (212) 501-5107.

GALLERY PLAYERS: presents "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown." \$15. \$10 students. 8 pm. 199 14th St. (718) 596-0547.

CHILDREN

CAMP FAIR: Parents and children with disabilities are invited to learn about camp options for summer 2004. 10 am to 3 pm. Church of St. Paul the Apostle, 405 W. 59th St. (212) 672-4650. Free.

BARNES AND NOBLE: Author and illustrator Tori Rexford reads children's books including "The Feel Good Book." 11 am. 106 Court St. (718) 246-4158. Free.

ARTY FACTS: Brooklyn Museum of Art invites kids to "Animals All Around." \$6 adults, free for members and children 12 and under. 11 am and 2 pm. SoLo, 4 pm. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-5200.

PUPPETWORKS: "Rumpelstiltskin" by The Brothers Grimm. \$6. \$7 adults. 4 pm and 6 pm. 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm. 338 Sixth Ave. (718) 965-3391.

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SUN. FEB 1

PERFORMANCE

CBBC: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts presents pianist Mark Levinson. \$20. 2 pm. Walk Whitman Theater, Brooklyn College, one block from the intersection of Flatbush and

Fri. Feb. 6

PERFORMANCE

DENTAL SCREENING: New York Methodist Hospital invites kids ages 6 to 16 for a screening. 7 am to 3:30 pm. 506 Sixth St. (718) 780-5410. Free.

RECEPTION: Black and White Gallery presents exhibit "Drawings by Southern Artists." 11 am to 7 pm. 483 Driggs Ave. (718) 599-8775. Free.

MUSICAL: Brooklyn Family Theater presents "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown." Appropriate for ages 4 and 5. \$12. 8 pm. 1012 Eighth Ave. (718) 670-7205.

BARGE MUSIC: presents a chamber music concert of all Bach. \$35. 7:30 pm. Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-0083.

BAM: Brooklyn Academy of Music presents Bill T. Jones and The Arnie Zane Dance Company in "Chaconne." "Merry 10 to 8 on a Circle." "Reading, Mercy," and "The Artificial Nigger." \$50. \$25. 7:30 pm. Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 636-4100.

GOOD COFFEEHOUSE: John Haidbrook plays acoustic guitar. \$10. \$5 kids. 8 pm. Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture, 53 Prospect Park West. (718) 768-2972.

OPERA: The New York City Opera Company of Brooklyn presents Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro." 8 pm. Call for ticket info. NYC College of Technology, Voorhees Theater, 186 Jay St. (212) 561-5263.

BRIC STUDIO: Alternative music cellist Jan Scarpa performs. \$10. \$8 students. 8 pm. 57 Brooklyn Place. (718) 855-7882.

SHAKESPEARE: Waterford Bridge Theater Company presents "Twelfth Night or What You Will." 8 pm. See Sat. Feb. 7.

FIRST WEEKEND: Brooklyn Arts Exchange presents a chamber music concert. 8 pm. See Sat. Feb. 7.

RECESSION: Brooklyn College class of 1954 will hold its 50th reunion anniversary on Jan. 3. Call. (718) 951-5060.

TAX HELP: The Community Service Society's Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Tax Counseling for the Elderly Program offers free tax help for seniors. (212) 614-5333.

REGISTRATION: Brooklyn Museum of Art is accepting registration for its 10-week art classes beginning Feb. 28 and Feb. 29. \$15. Call for information. (718) 501-6230.

DANCE CLASSES: Spoke the Hub Dance holds registration for spring classes for kids aged 2 through 18. Classes begin the second and third week of February. 250 Douglas

St. Call. (718) 408-3234.

REUNION: St. Bernadette hosts a reunion on May 23rd. Open to all "Explorations," an exhibit on the artist's



Oh, what a 'light'

Waterloo Bridge Theatre Company re-invigorates Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night' with fresh approach

By Paulanne Simmons
For The Brooklyn Papers

The Waterloo Bridge Theatre Company's recently acquired performance space in Park Slope is smaller than many people's living rooms. The stage has only a few overhead lights and does not have a curtain. Yet it is in this tiny theater that some of the liveliest and most innovative Shakespeare you have ever seen is being performed.

The company's current production, "Twelfth Night," is directed by Michael Hagins, who also stepped into the role of Sir Toby Belch after the actor who was originally cast suffered an injury. It features a troupe that is superb down to the most minor roles.

Written in 1600, when Shakespeare was 36 and leaving his youth behind, "Twelfth Night" stands on the optimistic belief that love conquers and cures all, and is tempered by the sure knowledge that lovers are often foolish and fickle and life is frequently unpredictable. The play is based on an old Italian comedy, "Gli Innamorati" (1537), which Shakespeare had already used for "Two Gentlemen of Verona." Like most of Shakespeare's comedies, its central conflict involves disguises and mistaken identity and is resolved by suitable marriages.

In "Twelfth Night," Sebastian and his twin sister Viola are shipwrecked off the coast of Illyria, each believing the other has perished. After Viola is rescued by a sea captain, she disguises herself as a boy, Cesario, and becomes the page of Orsino, duke of Illyria.

As Orsino's page, Cesario is sent to the home of the rich countess Olivia, who is in a seven-year mourning period for her dead brother. There he is to advance the suit of the lovesick duke. Olivia doesn't budge in regards to the duke but falls in love with Cesario.



Put up your dukes: Toby Belch (Patrick J. Egan) and Viola (Julie Ann McMillan) reluctantly fight it out in Waterloo Bridge Theatre Company's "Twelfth Night." Artistic Director J. Brandon Hill looks on.

The play also has one of Shakespeare's most amusing subplots: the clever scheming of Olivia's drunken uncle Sir Toby Belch; Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a knight he has introduced into Olivia's household in the hope he may win her hand; and Olivia's waiting woman, Maria — all of who want to get even

with Olivia's steward, whose name, Malvolio, meaning "ill will," explains their attitude. Presiding over this messy situation is Olivia's clown, Feste, the fool whose profound wisdom is probably Shakespeare's own.

Hagins has made two noteworthy changes to Shakespeare's script. He has turned Malvolio into a Mafia-type bodyguard (the fantastic Bruno Campolo) dressed in a black suit and toting an impressive hand gun.

And Antonio, the sea captain who rescues Sebastian, has become Antonio, whom Elizabeth Vocaum creates as a feisty, irresistible young lady madly in love with the man she saves from the sea. These changes work so well and seem so fitting, it almost seems that Shakespeare should have considered them himself.

Given the almost bare set (limited to two square boxes that serve as stools), minimum costumes (Sebastian and Viola — as Cesario — wear jump suits and the clown wears a jester's cap) and the intimacy of the theater, the audience cannot help but concentrate on the actors' delivery of the Bard's magnificent lines and the physicality of the actions that accompany them.

Of the principals, Robyn Beng's Olivia is passionate and hilariously extravagant in stark contrast to the decided composure of Julie Ann McMillan's Viola/Cesario. Colin Pritchard creates a sufficiently smug and self-centered Orsino, but could have come in a little heavier on the lovesick sighs that accompany lines like, "If music be the food of love, play on."

Likewise, neither Hagins nor Patrick Egan, as Sir Andrew Aguecheek, made their characters outrageous enough to bring

out all the humor inherent in those roles. Sir Toby Belch stands next to Falstaff as one of Shakespeare's bawdiest, and at the same time wisest, clowns. And his sidekick, the worthy knight, is certainly one of Shakespeare's biggest jerks. When playing either of these individuals, it's almost impossible to overact.

Having mentioned these minor failings, it is important to emphasize that frequently this production relies on supporting characters as a major source of laughter. Elizabeth Munn as Maria, woman to Olivia; Caroline Price as Fabian, servant to Olivia; and Rick Redondo as Feste (who also sings and plays the guitar beautifully) all make major contributions to the fast pace and high pitch of the production.

Like many people over a certain age, this reviewer has seen "Twelfth Night" more times than she would care to count. Nevertheless, the Waterloo Bridge Theatre Company has brought an excitement and originality to this play that makes it fresh and new once again. For all those fearful of braving the cold to get to this somewhat out-of-the-way playhouse, remember: there's nothing like laughter to keep you warm.

THEATER
The Waterloo Bridge Theatre Company's production of "Twelfth Night" plays through Feb. 8, Thursdays through Saturdays at 8 pm, and Sundays at 3 pm. Tickets are \$15, \$10 students. The Waterloo Bridge Playhouse is located at 475 Third Ave. at 10th Street in Gowanus. For reservations, call (212) 502-0076.

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Saturday, February 7, 2004 • 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Schmelvis: In search of Elvis Presley's Jewish Roots (2001)
Director: Max Wallace; Canada • Runtime: 76 minutes; MPAA Rating: Not Rated
"Who 'The King' looked like the claim that his great-grandmother was
Jewish leads a diverse group of filmmakers, including an ultra Orthodox and Jewish
Elvis impersonator, a Rabbi and the filmmaker, on a quest to Memphis to find out
what Elvis fans think of this revelation. (He did wear a Chai around his neck.) By the
time the group heads off to Israel to place a star for Elvis, it all comes to a head. Funny,
surprised and wistfully witty, Schmelvis brings a unique spin on celebrity, Judaism
and religious perceptions. It's a hoot."

Post-film concert and dialogue with Schmelvis,
the world famous Orthodox Jewish Elvis impersonator.

Saturday, February 14, 2004 • 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Welcome to the Waks Family (2002)
Director: Barbara Chobodsky; Australia • Runtime: 52 minutes; MPAA Rating: Not Rated
"With 17 children from the same two parents, the Orthodox Waks family is one of Australia's largest. Everyday life in the Waks
household is a logistical challenge of monumental proportions. Having two mini buses for transportation and nine ovens for
kitchen cooking helps. The director followed the warm and lively Waks family over years and was privy to the wedding of the
eldest daughter and the struggle of one son to break away from the religious life of his parents."

Post-film dialogue with Waks family member, Yossi Waks.

Saturday, February 21, 2004 • 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
One Day in September (1999)
Director: Kevin Macdonald; USA • Runtime: 92 minutes; MPAA Rating: Not Rated
Munich, August 1972. The Olympics of peace and joy commences, symbolizing Germany's past war rehabilitation in the eyes
of the international community. But ten days into the games, eight Palestinian terrorist break in and take eleven Israeli athletes
hostage, demanding a \$5 million ransom. As the world watches, the West German Police plan to
rescue the raiders. This Academy Award-winning documentary includes archive footage, eyewitness testimony, and the only
interviews ever recorded with the sole surviving member of the terrorist group.

Post-film dialogue with Simcha Weinstein,
former associate of the British Film Commission.

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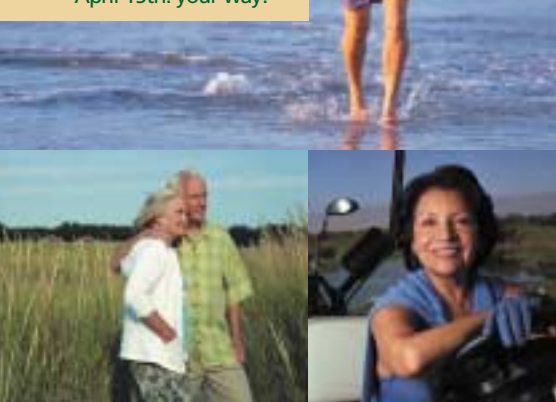
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SUNDANCE...

Continued from page 12

Chandra told GO Brooklyn that both she and Peterson have lived in Washington. "We wanted to make a film about the city that dashed stereotypes," she said. "David makes films about community and I make films about people who try to change the world. Together, we told the story of this poor church in the shadow of the White House where people are trying to take control of their lives."

Also in American Spectrum were Jim McKay's "Everyday People" and "Lbs.," the first feature by Midwood's Matthew Bonifacio. McKay doesn't live in Brooklyn (although he is looking for a place in Park Slope), but his story of the Jewish owner of a



New storytellers: (Left) Grayland Johnson, a former death row inmate now serving life without parole, in "Deadline," a documentary co-directed by Williamsburg's Kirsten Johnson. (Right) "Brother to Brother," featuring Anthony Mackie as Perry, by Boerum Hill writer-director Rodney Evans, won two Special Jury prizes.

Brooklyn restaurant that caters to a black clientele feels so true that one would think he was born and raised here. The owner's decision to sell to a big developer creates difficult choices for everyone — workers and customers alike.

McKay has been to Sundance before, so he is used to the constant state of frenzy that seems to exist. He's happy to see locals at the screenings, and "the saving grace is there are a lot of great films to see," he said.

Bonifacio's "Lbs.," is an intriguing hybrid. It was written by the director's leading man, the then-315-pound Carmine Famiglietti. It is the story of a Brooklyn man with a serious food addiction who uses his own creativity to shed weight. And in the course of making the film, Famiglietti lost a total of 170 pounds.

Director and writer met as extras on a commercial, and Bonifacio was intrigued by Famiglietti's determination to tell a compelling story and lose weight at the same time. "We shot over the course of about two years, and shot in seasonal segments," Bonifacio said. This allowed Famiglietti to lose weight, which he had to do — there was no "plan B" if he didn't lose it.

Park Slope's Lest Klainberg came to Sundance with a documentary, "In the Company of Women," that she co-directed with Gini Reticker. Presented as a special event at the festival, it celebrates women filmmakers and the strides they've made over the years.

No contest

Two filmmakers were in the Dramatic Competition at Sundance. Rodney Evans, of Boerum Hill, wrote and directed "Brother to Brother," which is, among other things, a study of the life of Richard Bruce Nugent, "an academic intellectual with street smarts." Cornell West meets Quentin Crisp," says Evans. Nugent died in the late '80s, but Evans reaches beyond Nugent to paint a portrait of the artists associated with the Harlem Renaissance.

Short stuff

A bevy of Brooklynites also showed up at Sundance with short films in tow. Included were "Welcome to Life" by Jowan Carbin, and "Sangam," by Prospect Heights resident Prashant Bhargava, another film that deals with immigration issues. "Scrabble," by Jay and Mark Duplass, shows a friendly board game gone terribly wrong. Mark lives in Greenpoint, Jay in Williamsburg, and the brothers made other shorts — Mark wrote the script in one day, and they shot it in one day. Although Mark's girlfriend, who plays the lead, did help with her character's dialogue.

"She tells me I don't know how to write for girls," said Mark.

The Duplass brothers are starting to work on features.

Jay told GO Brooklyn, "We've got two scripts we're trying to sell, but we want to make features like our shorts — very low concept."

Last but certainly not least, filmmakers Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck brought their short film, "Gownaus, Brooklyn," to Sundance. The film comes from a feature script they had written.

"We took one scene from the feature and built a new story with the same sentiment," said Boden.

"The short is sort of sweet, while the feature is a bit edgier," Fleck added.

The film is a cinematic sketch of a teenage student who happens upon her teacher's secret life, and it was cast with a lot of local talent, especially Shareeka Epps, who plays Drey, the student. Epps was "discovered" at MS 51 in Park Slope, and she came out to Sundance, too.

"Shareeka didn't say much in response to the festival, because she's so stoic," said Fleck, "but she couldn't hide the fact that she had an amazing time."

To add to the fun, the film won the Short Jury prize. When introduced to Jake Gyllenhaal ("Moonlight Mile," "Dennis the Menace"), Epps asked him, "Jane who?" and later realized he was a movie star and the host of the awards ceremony. This young lady gave the Hollywood types a dose of reality!

Before I left Sundance, I saw a Finnish documentary about a bizarre chorale group called "Screaming Men" whose only U.S. performance was at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Is Brooklyn the newest center of the cultural universe as well as a filmmaking hot spot? It may be time to transform the Brooklyn Navy Yard into film studios after all.

Marian Masone is the associate director of programming for the Film Society of Lincoln Center and chief curator of the New York Video Festival at Lincoln Center.

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